

CHAPTER TWO

Proposed Resource Management Plan

2. PROPOSED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

This chapter describes the Proposed Resource Management Plan (PRMP) for the Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area (NCA), which contains the decisions that would guide future management of the Sloan Canyon NCA for the next 20 years. In addition, this chapter contains the changes made between the Draft RMP/Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and the PRMP/Final EIS. The agency-preferred alternative analyzed in the Draft RMP was Alternative C, Moderate Developed Use. This alternative is the basis of the PRMP, however it was slightly modified based on internal reviews, cooperating agency collaboration, and public comments. The PRMP, used for the long-term management and protection of the NCA, is chosen from a compilation of the alternatives.

As part of the planning process, the public was invited to comment on the Draft RMP/EIS. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) considered these comments when preparing this PRMP and would consider protests of the PRMP before issuing a Record of Decision (ROD). Once the PRMP is adopted (the ROD is issued), changes to it would require a formal public amendment or revision process, with corresponding levels of environmental analyses in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act.

This PRMP contains management actions related to both general “land use” planning decisions and “implementing” decisions. The land use planning decisions establish goals and objectives for managing the NCA’s resources, as well as associated actions and uses. The implementing decisions constitute BLM’s final approval for on-the-ground actions to proceed.

Any person who participated in the RMP process, and that has an interest that may be adversely affected, may protest the proposed land use planning decisions contained in the PRMP (Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) 43 1610.5-2). The protests may raise only those issues that were submitted for the record during the planning process. Protests must be submitted to the BLM Director after the PRMP/FEIS is published in the fall of 2005 and prior to the issuance of the ROD. After that time, there is no further opportunity for decision review or administrative remedies for protest resolution. Unlike land use decisions, implementing decisions are not subject to protest but are subject to administrative remedies and review, primarily through appeals to the Office of Hearings and Appeals (BLM 2004a). The Summary of the Management Direction (Executive Summary Table ES.1) indicates which actions are land use and which are implementing. The “Dear Reader” letter that accompanies this PRMP provides a detailed explanation of protests and appeals.

Readers will notice an increased level of management direction in the recreation and wilderness resources. Although recreation use in the NCA historically has been low, visitation to the NCA will likely increase as the population of the Las Vegas Valley and the City of Henderson continues to grow and awareness of the NCA increases. Hence additional guidance is required to manage recreation issues and concerns. In addition, Appendix B contains a Recreation Monitoring Plan and Appendix C, the North McCullough Wilderness Management Plan, which details implementing actions for management of the Wilderness.

Please note that management actions often affect multiple resources. For example, many of the protections for the culturally important Sloan Canyon Petroglyph Site can be found in guidance under the recreation and wilderness resources. In addition, because they have no major planning issues or concerns, the following resources do not contain specific management direction: water resources and quality, air quality, minerals, abandoned mines, and hazardous materials.

2.1 DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROPOSED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

The first step in the planning process was to develop a vision for the NCA: to manage the Sloan Canyon NCA to preserve, protect, and enhance the area's cultural features and natural resources for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations. The comments and recommendations received during scoping from the public, tribes, cooperating agencies, and BLM resource specialists, which varied in range between retaining the natural character of the NCA and having different levels of NCA facility development and resource use, were analyzed within this framework. Alternative themes (in addition to Alternative A: No Action) were prepared to reflect the various development levels (Alternative B: Emphasize Natural Character; Alternative C: Moderate Developed Use; Alternative D: Emphasize Developed Uses). All of the scoping comments and recommendations were placed under one of the four alternative management scenarios. With the exception of recommendations that were outside the scope of the Sloan Canyon NCA Act and Clark County Act, Title II ("Wilderness Areas") and that could not be enacted for statutory or regulatory reasons, all comments and recommendations by participants during the scoping process were included in one or more of the management alternatives.

With alternative themes defined, resource specialists from BLM and the cooperating agencies developed specific objectives and actions for their area of expertise. The BLM planning team and cooperating agencies worked closely together to develop the alternatives, to carefully review the alternatives to ensure consistency within each alternative management scenario, and to identify any potential conflicts among resource prescriptions that might occur within the alternatives.

The goal of alternatives development was to construct a range of management actions and tools to balance the predicted increase in use of the NCA with protection of the NCA's outstanding characteristics, such as its primitive character and cultural resources. Alternatives had to meet the purpose and need of the NCA management plan (Chapter 1); be viable and reasonable; provide a mix of resource protections, management use, and development; be responsive to issues identified during scoping; and meet the established planning criteria, federal laws, regulations, and BLM planning policy.

Visitor usage of the North McCullough Range was low before the designation of the Sloan Canyon NCA and North McCullough Wilderness. Due to rapid growth in the Las Vegas Valley, an increase in visitors is expected. To respond to any impact from such an increase in visitors, the alternatives and management actions contain flexibility to adjust future management approaches. This flexibility also allows for adjustments in response to unforeseen pressures from use or resource conflicts.

Alternative A: No Action

The No Action Alternative is required by the National Environmental Policy Act to provide a baseline for comparison of impacts of the other alternatives. The No Action Alternative was a continuation of current management and was based on available inventory data, existing planning decisions and policies, and existing land use allocations and programs. The current management was analyzed in detail in the Management Situation Analysis (BLM 2003b) and included direction and decisions contained in the *Las Vegas RMP* (BLM 1998a); all existing laws, regulations, and policy; the Wilderness Act of 1964; and the specific mandates that established the NCA and North McCullough Wilderness. The *Las Vegas RMP* (BLM 1998a) provides the overarching guidance for managing BLM lands in southern Nevada, whereas the Sloan Canyon NCA Act and Clark County Act, Title II ("Wilderness Areas") provide specific direction to BLM for managing the NCA and the Wilderness.

Alternative B: Emphasize Natural Character

Alternative B emphasized the natural character of the NCA and, in general, represented the most “hands-off” management approach while being the most resource-protective. Developed recreation, such as proposed trails, would be minimized, and opportunities for solitude and wilderness-type experiences would be maximized. Visits to the Sloan Canyon Petroglyph Site would be permitted only by guided tour. All existing roads and trails would be closed to the public for motorized use.

Alternative C: Allow Moderate Developed Use While Maintaining Natural Character

Alternative C focused on a moderate increase in development while maintaining the natural characteristics of the NCA. Recreational opportunities such as hiking, mountain biking, equestrian use, and dispersed camping would be provided, and a requirement to remain on designated trails, once developed, in certain areas would be established. The Sloan Canyon Petroglyph Site would be accessed mainly from a visitor center at the north end of Sloan Canyon, and guided tours would be required during heavy visitation periods. Most existing roads and trails would be closed to the public for motorized use.

Alternative D: Emphasize Developed Uses

Alternative D took a more active management approach, allowing maximum use while maintaining and enhancing resource conditions. This alternative emphasized developed uses of the NCA and included the greatest opportunity for recreational diversity. Off-highway vehicle (OHV) use would be authorized on a limited number of proposed trails, and opportunities for hiking, mountain biking, equestrian use, and camping would be maximized. The Sloan Canyon Petroglyph Site would be accessed from a visitor center at the north end of Sloan Canyon or from a visitor contact station at the Hidden Valley Trailhead on a self-guided basis. Guided tours would be offered on request.

2.2 SELECTION OF THE PROPOSED MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Proposed Management Plan was selected because it serves the purpose of the NCA as described by the enacting legislation and the NCA vision as developed by the interagency planning team. It provides for moderate levels of developed recreation, facilities, and transportation, with management actions to ensure that neither resources nor visitor experiences are unacceptably degraded. Elements of each of the draft alternatives, including Alternative B, the preferred Alternative C, and Alternative D, are included in the PRMP. Section 2.3 provides detailed management for each resource or resource use within the NCA, as appropriate. Table ES.1 in the Executive Summary summarizes and compares key management under the PRMP and the alternatives considered in the Draft RMP (BLM 2005).

The Sloan Canyon NCA Act directed BLM to grant the City of Henderson a right-of-way (ROW) for the North McCullough Road (N-65874), which is envisioned as a scenic roadway constructed to provide access to the NCA, trailheads, and overlook points. The Act requires BLM to recommend a location for the North McCullough Road as part of this planning process. Based on ground surveys, field visits, impact assessments, and extensive dialogue with City of Henderson planners and engineers, as well as cooperating agencies, BLM recommends the proposed Northern Corridor as the location for North McCullough Road. Any future development related to this scenic roadway-associated trail would require additional environmental review.

2.3 CHANGES FROM THE DRAFT TO THE PROPOSED RMP/FEIS

This section contains a summary of the differences in the management actions between the preferred alternative in the Draft RMP/EIS and this proposed plan. The changes were made based on internal reviews, agency collaboration, and public comments.

- The semi-primitive management emphasis area has been extended to the north on the east side of the NCA to include Black Mountain and additional critical bighorn habitat.
- The Proposed Management Plan has been modified to allow cross-country hiking and equestrian use in areas designated for trail use only until BLM trails are established and in use, after which some or all use may be restricted to proposed trails. Additional trails would be planned, designed, and constructed through a systematic process that would evaluate needs, potential uses, suitable destinations, and public interest, through an environmental assessment. A hiking trail system with a wide range of uses is anticipated. As in the original preferred alternative, hiking trails would not be limited to the two ROWs for hiking trails that were previously issued to the City of Henderson, as prescribed by the Sloan Canyon Act (one is included in the ROW for the North McCullough Road).
- Unauthorized constructed and social trails would be evaluated and considered for closure, restoration, or adoption into the trail system. All new disturbances within the NCA would be treated as trespasses, with appropriate administrative or law enforcement actions.
- Additional restrictions would be placed on equestrian use, including prohibiting watering at wildlife water developments and a requirement to remove animal waste at trailheads.
- Dogs would be allowed on-leash in designated areas and prohibited from the remainder of the NCA.
- All campfire fuels must be packed in and out; no fuels natural to the NCA can be used. BLM would encourage the use of portable stoves for preparing meals.
- Rockhounding is prohibited within the NCA.
- Commercial special recreation permits (SRPs) would be issued on a case-by-case basis to outfitters and guides.
- Management actions for the Petroglyph Management Area (e.g., visitor use restrictions) would be implemented once adequate NCA infrastructure are in place.
- Casual and commercial collection of vegetation and reptiles would be prohibited throughout the NCA.
- Visitors would be educated to be sensitive to raptors during nesting seasons.

2.4 THE SLOAN CANYON NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA PROPOSED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

The PRMP is described below. The Plan contains specific management actions (numbered per resource [e.g., MEA 1]), as well as background information, that would guide future decisions.

2.4.1 Management Emphasis Areas

Management Emphasis Areas (MEA) provide a framework for identifying BLM's management intent for a particular geographic area and for evaluating future actions and proposals. By assigning appropriate MEA categories to all portions of the NCA, future actions can be considered that have not been specifically addressed in this plan. This would help ensure that the RMP remains flexible and current over time.

Management Direction

The MEAs reflect the potential for increased development at the main access points for the NCA. The north access to Sloan Canyon around the potential visitor center would be zoned as Developed, and the highly visited Petroglyph Management Area would be a Semi-Primitive zone. In addition, the area north of the North McCullough Road and Trail ROW (N-65874), near the Dutchman Pass Trailhead, would be zoned Roaded Natural, as would the area south of the Quo Vadis Trailhead.

MEA 1: Manage use of the NCA consistent with the objectives of the Management Emphasis Areas (MEAs) identified in Figure 2.1.

Each MEA zone has a set of objectives that describe the physical, social, and managerial setting of the area and that provide standards for future management. To provide for a positive visitor experience, any future actions or improvements within a zone must be consistent with the established guidelines and expectations.

Objectives

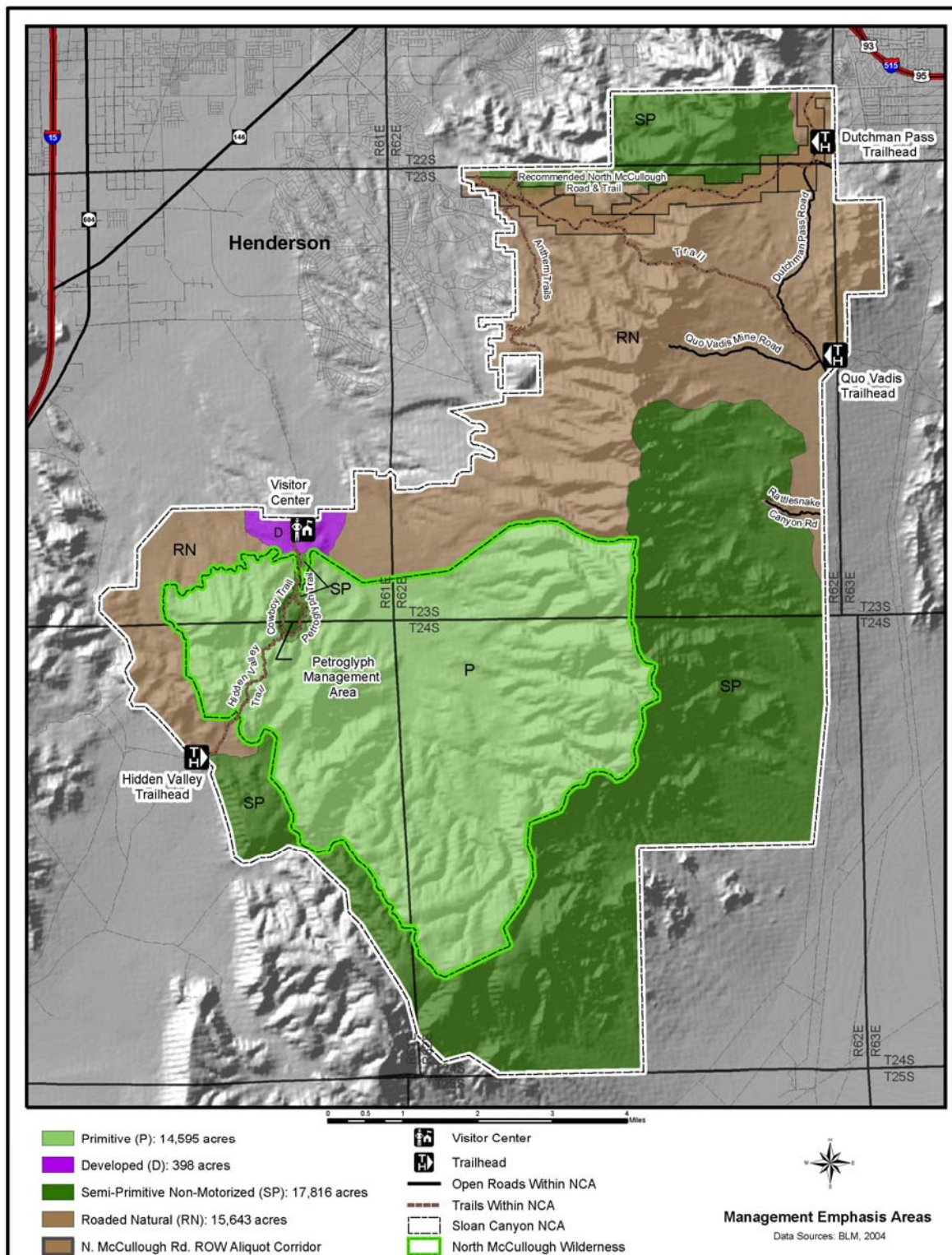
Primitive

- Includes remote areas not on primary travel routes or easily accessed.
- Access is by hiking and horseback; no mechanized vehicles (including mountain bikes) are allowed.
- Human interaction is rare to low; evidence of other uses is minimal.
- No onsite controls or improvements provided except those required for resource protection.
- More visitor risk is assumed; self-reliance is necessary.

Semi-Primitive; Non-Motorized

- Areas may not necessarily be remote and access may be easy, but human interaction is low.
- Motorized use is prohibited; existing roads could be closed and could be converted to trails.
- Opportunities provided could include mountain bike, equestrian, and hiking trails.
- Offsite controls preferred.
- Construction of facilities would be avoided except where they provide resource protection or aid in visitor safety.

Figure 2.1. Management Emphasis Areas



Roaded Natural

- The recreational experience is based on the natural setting.
- Human interaction is low to moderate, but more often on the low side.
- Includes areas with roads.
- Developments limited to improved access and those consistent with the natural environment.
- Opportunities provided may include roads, trails, and camping sites (new improvements for resource protection only).
- Onsite controls present but subtle.

Roaded Developed

- Recreation activities rely on and are consistent with the natural environment.
- Human interaction level moderate to high in more developed portions and low to moderate elsewhere.
- May include paved roads and buildings, but the design should blend with the natural environment.
- Onsite controls, facilities, and law enforcement noticeable.

Developed

- Substantial modification of the natural environment.
- Human interaction level moderate to high.
- Motorized use and parking available.
- Onsite controls obvious and facilities widely available.
- Law enforcement moderately visible.

2.4.2 Recreation

Goal

Provide recreation opportunities within the NCA, including the North McCullough Wilderness, consistent with the Sloan Canyon NCA Act and the Clark County Act, Title II (“Wilderness Areas”).

Objectives

- Provide an array of outdoor recreation opportunities and experiences within the NCA.
- Manage recreation uses so that recreation-related disturbances are minimized.

Management Direction

Recreational use of the NCA historically has been at low to moderate levels, and future actions by both BLM and the surrounding communities would contribute to the kinds of recreational opportunities

available in the NCA. To be flexible and responsive to increased user demands, recreation would be managed for experiences and beneficial outcomes based on the MEA zone objectives described in Section 2.4.1. The character of the management zones ranges from Primitive to Developed in terms of their physical, social, and administrative attributes, and these attributes define the character of the respective recreation opportunities (e.g., activities available).

Because use of the NCA will likely change dramatically over the coming years, this RMP contains flexible management guidance, which would be refined into specific management criteria based on use and resource monitoring. Visitation and resource monitoring would be used to assess and establish the NCA's baseline resource conditions and document any changes to them (Appendix B, Recreation Monitoring Plan). Once the resource baselines are determined, a system such as Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) could be used to establish thresholds for future actions.

REC 1: Use fees could be charged in designated areas of the NCA. Specific fee guidelines and amounts would be determined at a later time, consistent with nearby State and federal facilities.

REC 2: Interpretive information and materials pertaining to the NCA's unique cultural and natural resources would be provided to visitors to enhance their recreational experiences.

Hiking/Equestrian Use/Mountain Biking Areas

Based on likely amounts of use and in an effort to preserve visual and biological resources, the subsequent need for administrative controls, and the reduction of conflicts among users, the NCA would designate use areas for hiking, equestrian use, and mountain biking.

Cross-country hiking would be allowed in trail-use-only areas until BLM trails are established and in use, after which some or all of these areas may be restricted to hiking on designated trails. Additional trails would be planned, designed, and constructed through a systematic process that would evaluate needs, potential uses, suitable destinations, and public interest, through an environmental assessment. Under the proposed plan, a hiking trail system with a wide range of uses is anticipated. Hiking trails would not be limited to the two ROWs for hiking trails that were previously issued to the City of Henderson as prescribed by the Sloan Canyon Act (one is included in the ROW for the North McCullough Road).

REC 3: Designate hiking use areas—one area in which hiking would be limited to trails once they have been designated, constructed, and in use; and the other for cross-country hiking (Figure 2.2).

REC 4: In some areas, horses and pack animals would be required to remain on designated trails once trails are designated, constructed, and in use. Cross-country equestrian use would be allowed in other areas and horses and pack animals would be prohibited in high-use portions of the NCA (Figure 2.3).

REC 5: No animal, other than a horse, burro, or mule, could be used in the NCA for the purpose of transporting people or their possessions.

REC 6: Horse feed and hay must be certified weed-free to prevent the spread of noxious and invasive weeds.

REC 7: Watering of animals would be prohibited at wildlife water developments, and animal waste must be removed from trailheads.

REC 8: Mountain biking would be allowed only on a limited system of designated multiple-use trails and on designated vehicle roads (Figure 2.4).

Figure 2.2. Hiking

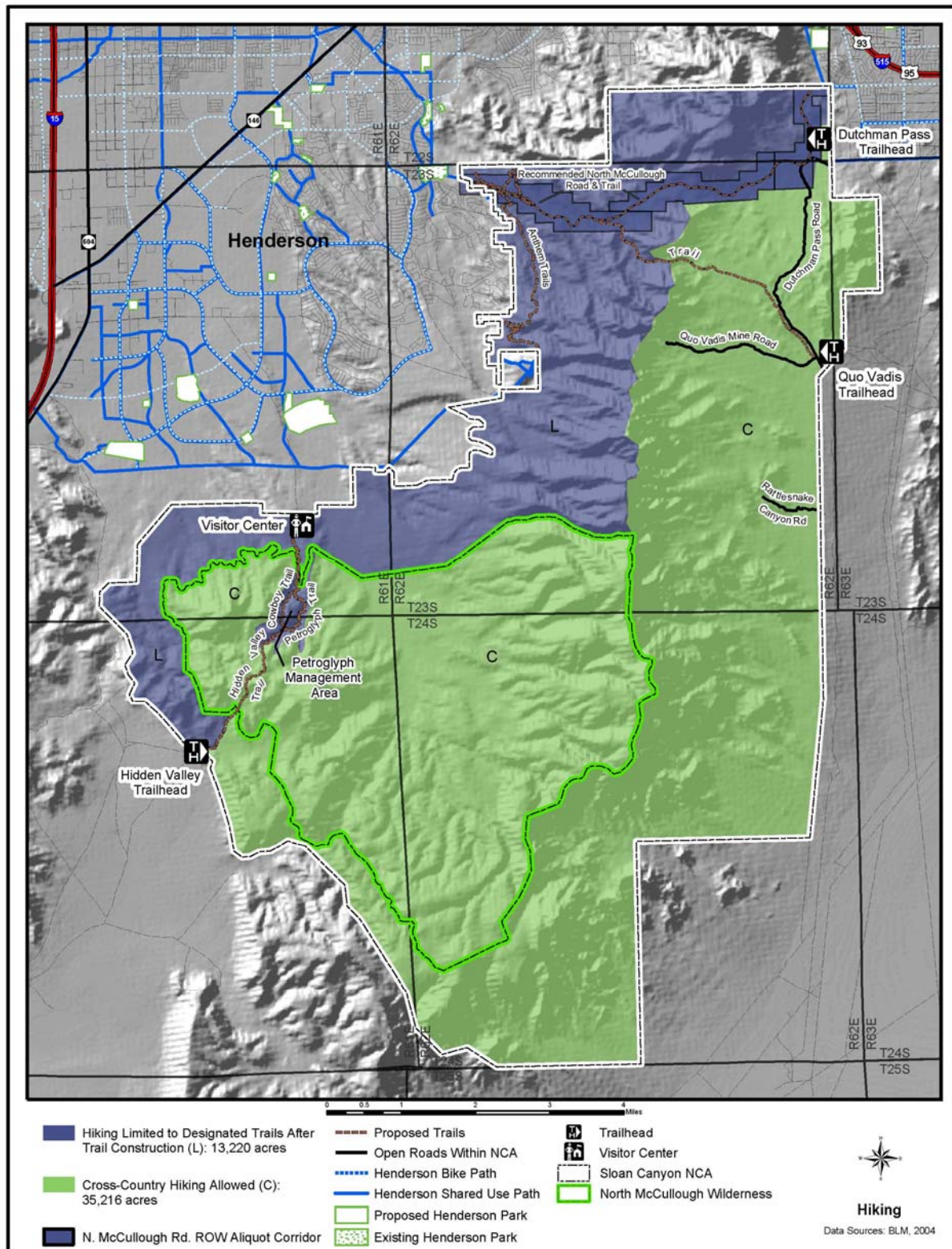
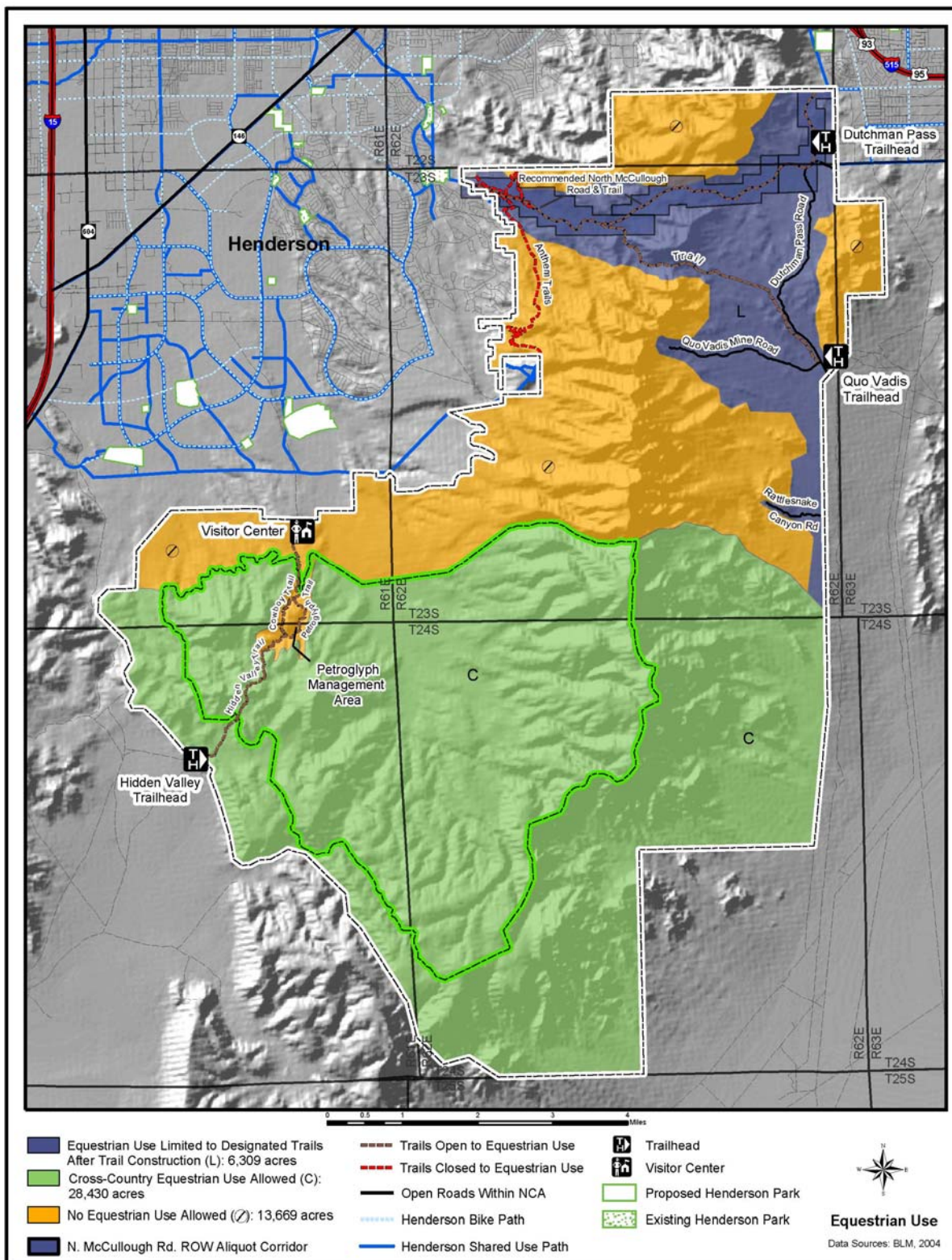


Figure 2.3. Equestrian Use



Trails

A trail system would be designed and constructed to accommodate multiple uses (hiking, biking, and equestrian use), as appropriate.

REC 9: Initially, the following trails would be proposed:

Proposed Trails	Activities
Petroglyph Trail	Hiking
Cowboy Trail	Hiking
Hidden Valley Trail	Hiking, equestrian use
Anthem Trail System (N-76312)	Hiking, mountain biking
North McCullough Trail (N-65874)	Hiking, equestrian use, mountain biking
Unnamed trail following east-west power line road	Hiking, equestrian use, mountain biking

Additional trails would be planned, designed, and constructed through a systematic process that would evaluate needs, potential uses, suitable destinations, and public interest, through an environmental assessment. Under the proposed plan, a trail system with a wide range of uses is anticipated.

Site-specific resource conditions would be considered when selecting trail locations and designing trail features; for example, trails would not be constructed within 1/4-mile of wildlife water developments. Trails development in sensitive natural or cultural areas would be avoided if possible. Wheelchairs would be allowed in the Wilderness, but BLM would not required to facilitate such uses.

REC 10: Trails would be added as needed and if their design and construction would not cause unacceptable impacts to sensitive cultural resources, natural resources, or wilderness values.

REC 11: All trails outside the Wilderness would be evaluated and developed with consideration to the *Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990* prior to construction and designation.

REC 12: Any unauthorized constructed or social trails would be evaluated and considered as to whether to close, restore, or adopt them into the trail system. Any unauthorized surface disturbance would be treated as a trespass and subject to appropriate administrative or law enforcement action.

OHV

Throughout this plan, the term “OHV” refers to any motorized vehicle capable of operating on roads, trails, or other areas that are not maintained. These vehicles are not required to be street- registered and include motorcycles, all-terrain vehicles (ATV), dune buggies, and four-wheel drive vehicles.

REC 13: The entire NCA would be closed to OHV use.

Dogs

REC 14: Leashed dogs would be allowed within designated areas of the NCA and, within those areas, must remain on trails once they are designed and constructed. Dogs are prohibited in the remainder of the NCA (Figure 2.5).

REC 15: Dog feces must immediately be picked up and packed out. Low-profile, natural-colored dispensers for dog waste bags would be placed and maintained at trailheads.

Nighttime Use

No camping sites, water, or other amenities would be provided, and campers would have to be self-sufficient.

REC 16: Primitive, dispersed camping would be allowed in the areas shown on the Camping Map (Figure 2.6). In addition, no camping would be allowed within a 1/4-mile radius of water sources.

REC 17: Campfires would be allowed at camping sites in fire pans or with fire blankets; no campfire rings allowed. All fuels must be packed in and packed out. No natural fuels in the NCA could be used for campfires. Fire waste products must be packed out of the NCA. BLM would encourage the use of portable gas, jellied petroleum, or pressurized liquid fuel stoves for preparing meals.

REC 18: The Petroglyph Management Area would be designated for Day Use Only, with fires, camping, and nighttime use prohibited. Exceptions may be allowed only under special circumstances and with the approval of the Sloan Canyon NCA manager.

REC 19: Permits for overnight parking to support activities such as camping and night hiking would be required and would be issued in accordance with NCA policy, which would be developed in the future.

Other Recreation Use

REC 20: Bouldering and traditional rock climbing (no permanent anchors) would be allowed throughout the NCA, including the Wilderness, except in the Petroglyph Management Area and its northern access and in identified sensitive resource areas.

REC 21: Rockhounding would be prohibited within the NCA.

REC 22: Geocaching would be prohibited within the NCA.

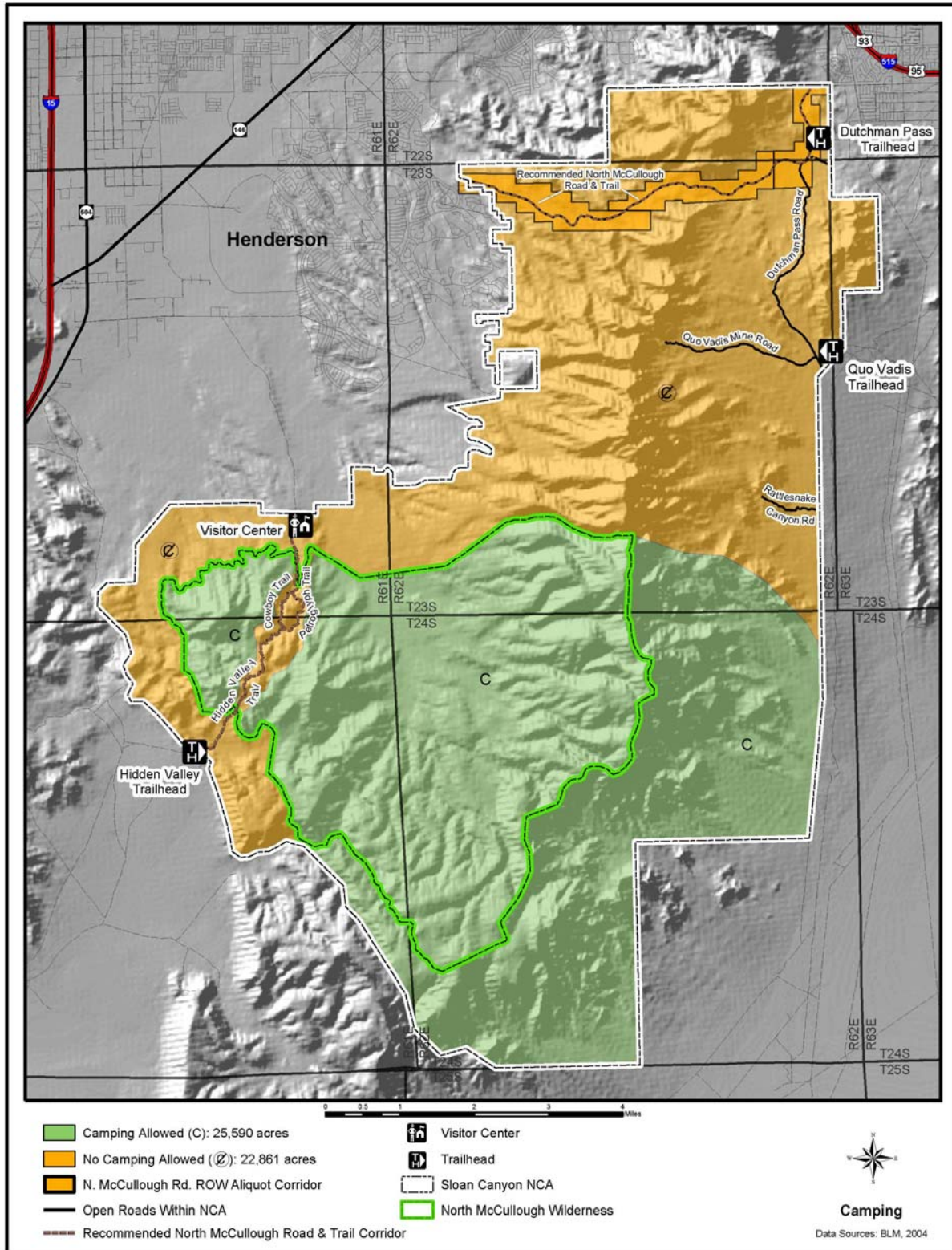
REC 23: All forms of recreational target shooting, including but not limited to firearms, bows, crossbows, and paintball guns, would be prohibited throughout the NCA.

REC 24: Hunting would be prohibited in the Petroglyph Management Area, but hunting activities, including the use of hunting dogs, would be allowed within the remainder of the NCA in conformance with State of Nevada laws and regulations.

Special Recreational Permits

Various recreational uses that could occur within the NCA require an SRP. SRPs would be issued consistent with the purposes of the NCA and Wilderness to disperse visitor use, protect natural resources, provide for the health and safety of visitors, and provide a fair return to the Government for the opportunity to make a profit for the commercial recreational use of public lands. Activities requiring an SRP include commercial use, competitive use, vending, and organized group activity and event use.

Figure 2.6. Camping



SRPs would be issued at the discretion of the Las Vegas Field Office Authorizing Officer, who may at any time and without prior notice choose not to issue permits for certain activities or use areas. Such decisions could be based on a variety of factors, such as planning decisions, potential resource impacts, existing outfitters in the same area, overcrowding, past poor performance, and other concerns. Ongoing evaluations of the number, appropriateness, and impacts of SRPs would be conducted, and issuance limits would be considered based on these evaluations.

Commercial use involves an individual or organizations which provide recreational opportunities that are business-related or involve financial gain.

REC 25: Hunting outfitters and guides would be required to obtain an SRP through the Las Vegas Field Office Authorizing Officer to operate within the NCA.

Competitive use refers to events and activities that include an element of competition, such as a running race.

REC 26: Competitive SRPs could be issued in the NCA outside the Wilderness.

Vending permits are temporary authorizations to sell goods or services on public lands and are usually in conjunction with a recreation activity.

REC 27: Vending SRPs could be issued in the NCA outside the Wilderness.

Organized Group Activity and Event Use may require an SRP even if not commercial or competitive in nature. The Las Vegas Field Office Authorizing Officer determines when an SRP would be needed based on resource concerns, user conflicts, public health and safety, and other factors.

REC 28: All organized groups would be required to obtain an SRP on a case-by-case basis for group activities outside the Petroglyph Management Area.

2.4.3 North McCullough Wilderness

The Proposed Action is consistent with the Clark County Conservation of Public Lands and Natural Resources Act of 2002 (the Clark County Act), the Wilderness Act of 1964, Grazing Guidelines (House Report No. 101-405, Appendix A), and Wildlife Management Guidelines (House Report No. 101-405, Appendix B). It is also consistent with 43 CFR 6300, BLM Manuals 8560 (*Management of Designated Wilderness Areas*) and 8561 (*Wilderness Management Plans*), BLM Handbook H-8560-1 (*Management of Designated Wilderness Areas*), *Las Vegas Resource Management Plan* (BLM 1998a), Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between BLM and the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) (BLM MOU 6300-NV930-0402, Supplement 9), and the *Clark County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan* (MSHCP) (Clark County Department of Comprehensive Planning [CCDCP], 2000).

Goals

- To provide for the long-term protection and preservation of the area's wilderness character under a principle of nondegradation. The area's natural condition, opportunities for solitude, opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation and any ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value present will be managed so that they will remain unimpaired.

- To manage the wilderness area for the use and enjoyment of visitors in a manner that will leave the area unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness. The wilderness resource will be dominant in all management decisions where a choice must be made between preservation of wilderness character and visitor use.
- To manage the area using the minimum tool, equipment, or structure necessary to successfully, safely, and economically accomplish the objective. The chosen tool, equipment, or structure should be the one that least degrades wilderness values temporarily or permanently. Management will seek to preserve spontaneity of use and as much freedom from regulations as possible.
- To manage nonconforming but accepted uses permitted by the Wilderness Act and subsequent laws in a manner that will prevent unnecessary or undue degradation of the area's wilderness character. Nonconforming uses are the exception rather than the rule, therefore emphasis is placed on maintaining wilderness character.

Objectives

- Maintain or improve solitude within the Wilderness.
- Maintain or improve naturalness in the Wilderness to achieve a standard of No Known Surface Disturbances and stable or decreasing non-native plant populations.
- Provide a diversity of opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation.

Management Direction

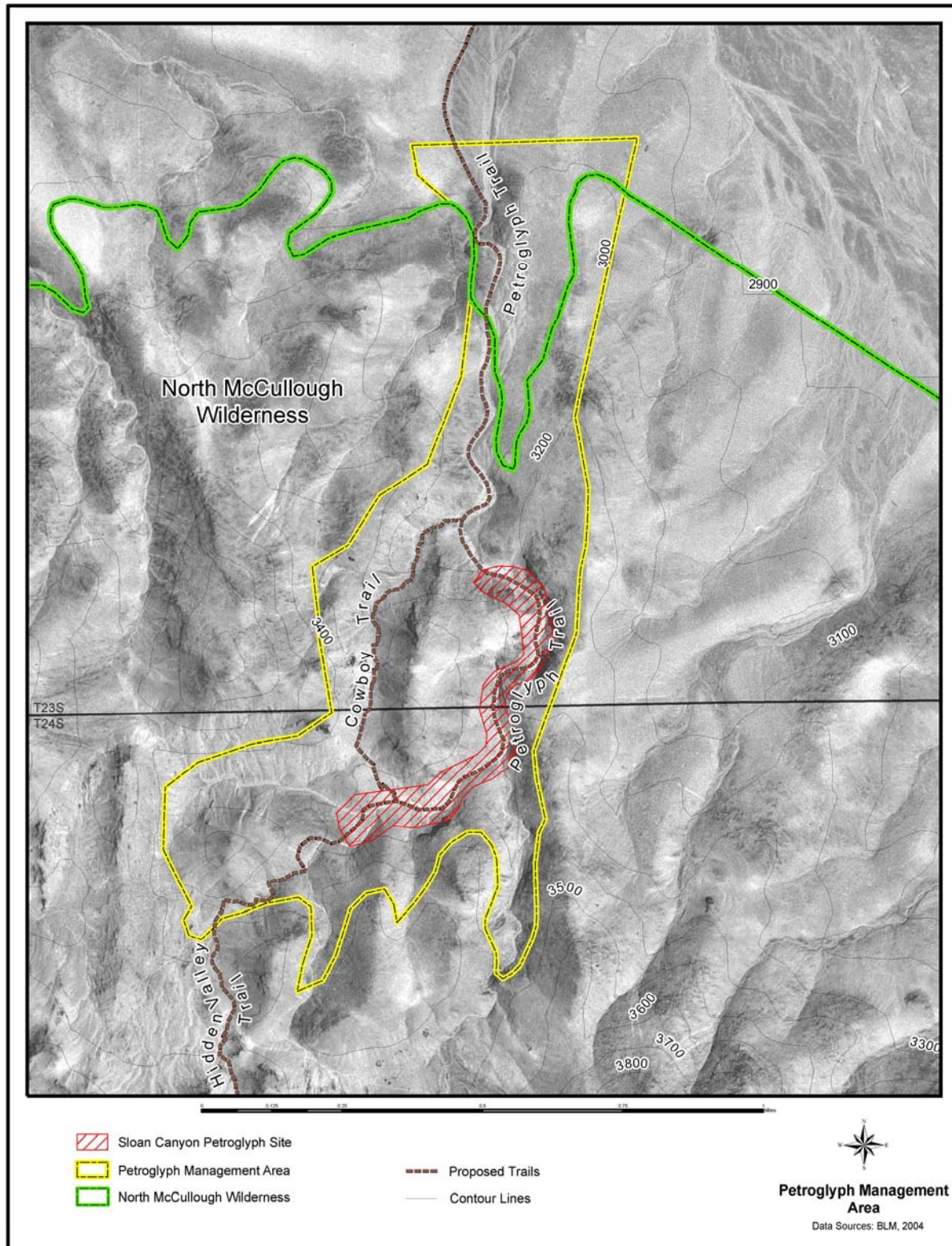
Wilderness management actions provide opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation opportunities, such as hiking and equestrian use, while providing a level of management necessary to protect sensitive resources and wilderness characteristics. Because the North McCullough Wilderness is close to the Las Vegas Valley, its management, including that of the Petroglyph Management Area (Figure 2.7), is intended to be flexible and responsive as use amounts and patterns are established. Monitoring would be used to assess and establish the Wilderness' baseline conditions and document any changes to them. Once the resource baselines are determined, a system such as LAC could be used to establish thresholds for future actions. Visitation could be monitored using techniques such as contacts with visitors, social surveys conducted at Wilderness access points, and trailhead register data.

The Wilderness Management Plan, Appendix C, contains additional guidance to implement the actions selected as part of this PRMP.

Visitation

The Wilderness Management Plan, Appendix C, establishes visitor numbers, group size, and seasonal and area limits so that wilderness characteristics, including solitude, are not impacted beyond an acceptable limit. Some or all of the following management techniques could be used to maintain wilderness characteristics and protect resources: number people at one time, size of party, timing of visits, daily visitation limits, permits, reservations, guides, and self-guided tours.

Figure 2.7. Petroglyph Management Area



WLD 1: Wilderness characteristics would be maintained at or below established thresholds and limits.

WLD 2: To minimize impacts to wilderness characteristics and natural resources of the area, visitation within the Petroglyph Management Area would be limited, although different visitation thresholds would be established for the remainder of the Wilderness.

WLD 3: If through monitoring it is found necessary, the visitation thresholds limits could be adjusted.

Petroglyph Management Area Visitation

Once residential development on the western side of the NCA is complete, the Sloan Canyon Petroglyph Site will be just a short distance from a large urban population. To manage the potential high number of visitors, to protect the sensitive cultural and natural resources, and to protect wilderness characteristics, detailed management actions were developed. These actions would be implemented once adequate NCA infrastructure is in place.

WLD 4: Visitors to the Petroglyph Management Area during periods of high use, such as weekends and holidays, must join a BLM-sponsored tour. No more than one guided group of no more than 20 people would be allowed in the Petroglyph Management Area at one time. With prior reservations, organized groups of 10 to 35 people would be allowed to visit the Petroglyph Management Area, accompanied by a BLM-sponsored guide.

WLD 5: During periods of lower use (such as weekdays), visitors may go to the Petroglyph Management Area unaccompanied by a BLM-sponsored guide if they obtain a permit. Self-guided tour permits could be issued from the visitor center at the north entrance to Sloan Canyon or from a roving ranger or at the Hidden Valley Trailhead. A total of no more than 25 permits per hour would be issued for self-guided tours.

When obtaining a permit, all nonguided canyon visitors would experience an interpretive presentation on appropriate visitor use and site etiquette at cultural resources sites and within wilderness. At the visitor center, an interpretive presentation could include a video or a static display; but at the Hidden Valley Trailhead or in backcountry locations, it would likely be an informal presentation at the time of permitting, or brochures and kiosk information.

WLD 6: Access to and use of the Petroglyph Management Area would be confined to the canyon bottom and a limited number of proposed trails.

WLD 7: The main access to the Petroglyph Management Area would be controlled through a visitor center located near the NCA boundary at the northern end of the Sloan Canyon wash. Rangers and other BLM staff or designated personnel could patrol the Petroglyph Management Area for visitors entering from points other than the visitor center and would either deny access based on visitation levels or issue a visitation permit.

WLD 8: Use of the Petroglyph Management Area would be limited to the visitor center's operational hours, which would be determined by BLM before the center is opened.

Hiking and Equestrian Use

WLD 9: Cross-country hiking would be allowed throughout the Wilderness, except for the Petroglyph Management area and its north access, where hikers must stay on designated trails.

WLD 10: The entire Wilderness would be available for cross-county equestrian use, except for the Petroglyph Management area and its north access.

WLD 11: Horse feed and hay must be certified weed-free to prevent the spread of noxious and invasive weeds.

WLD 12: Watering of equestrian and/or pack animals at waterlife water developments is prohibited.

Trails

To minimize resource impacts, trails from both the north and south entrances would be designated and constructed (Figure 2.8). No developments would be made or offered on the Petroglyph Trail at the rockfall site.

WLD 13: In the Wilderness, there would be three trail options: the traditional hike in Sloan Canyon wash (Petroglyph Trail), a newly constructed trail which forks off the traditional wash hike and avoids the rockfall portion of the wash (Cowboy Trail), and access to the Petroglyph Management Area from the south via a designated 1.5-mile trail from the Hidden Valley Trailhead.

WLD 14: Wilderness trails would be added to the system as necessary for the protection of resources and wilderness character.

WLD 15: Site-specific resource conditions would be considered when selecting trail locations and designing trail features.

WLD 16: The development of developments (such as trails) near wildlife water (guzzlers) would be prohibited within a 1/4-mile radius of the guzzler.

WLD 17: Minimal permanent developments would be allowed only for the purposes of resource protection measures, enhancement of wilderness values, and erosion control and only after conducting a minimum requirement/minimum tool analysis.

WLD 18: New social trails resulting in resource damage within the Wilderness (not desired for future designation, modification, or use) would be restored after completing a minimum requirement/minimum tool analysis. Low-profile, wilderness-appropriate “Closed” signs would be installed on social trails. Associated recreation use would be dispersed to other locations using area closures, barriers, and visitor information. The visible portions of these social trails would be restored using nonmechanized means and native vegetation. The nonvisible portions of the social trails would be left to restore naturally.

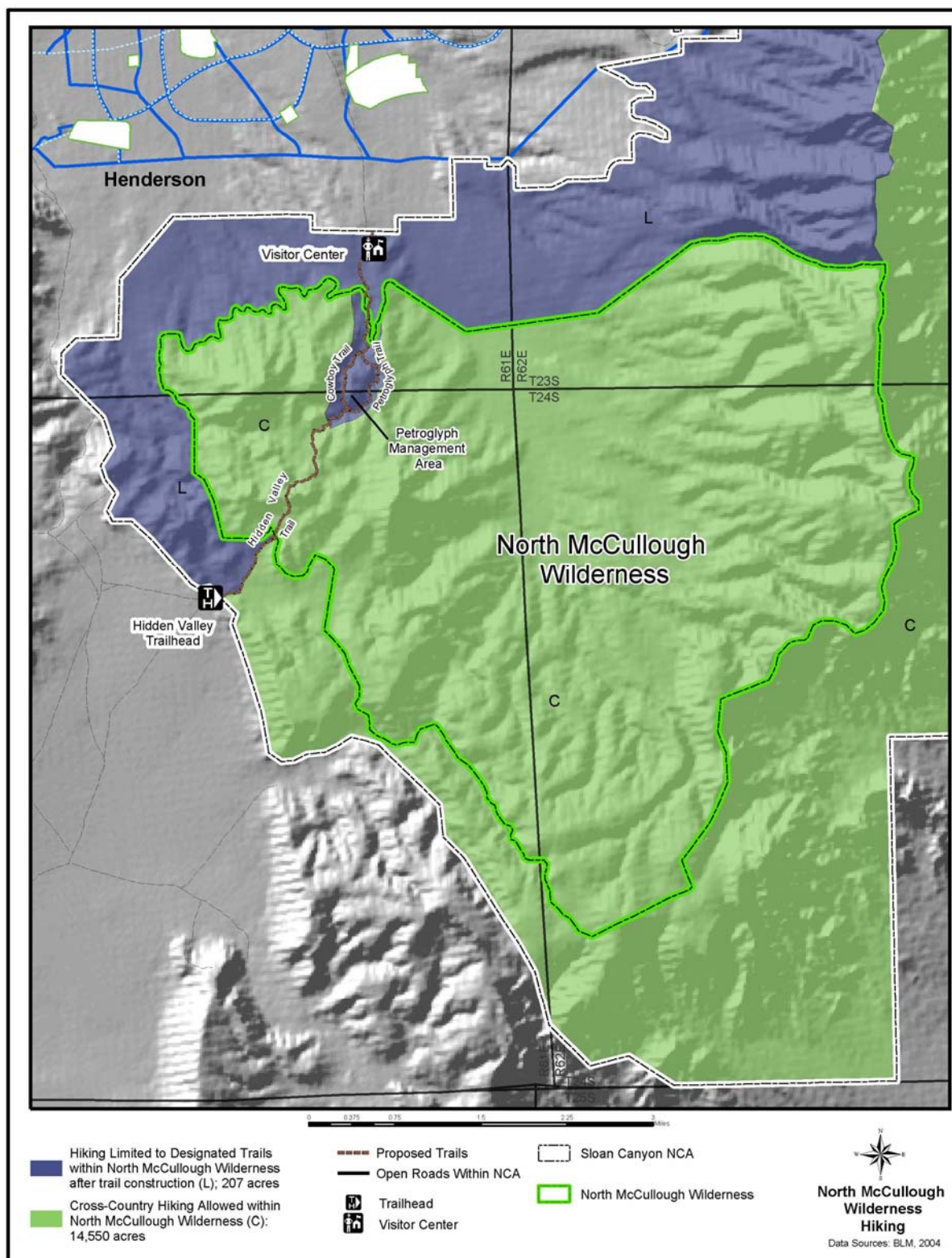
Dogs

WLD 19: No dogs would be allowed in the Wilderness.

Nighttime Use

WLD 20: Primitive, dispersed camping would be allowed within the Wilderness, except in the Petroglyph Management Area. No camping sites, water, or other amenities would be provided, and

Figure 2.8. North McCullough Wilderness Hiking



campers would have to be self-sufficient. In addition, no camping would be allowed within a 1/4-mile radius of water sources.

WLD 21: Campfires would be allowed at camping sites in fire pans or with fire blankets; no campfire rings allowed. All fuels must be packed in and packed out. No natural fuels in the NCA could be used for campfires. Campfire waste products must be packed out of the NCA. BLM would encourage the use of portable stoves for preparing meals.

WLD 22: The Petroglyph Management Area would be designated for Day Use Only, with fires, camping, and nighttime use prohibited. Exceptions may be allowed only under special circumstances and with the approval of the Sloan Canyon NCA manager.

Other Recreation Use

WLD 23: Bouldering and traditional rock climbing (no permanent anchors) would be allowed in the Wilderness outside of identified sensitive resource areas, the Petroglyph Management Area and its northern access.

WLD 24: Rockhounding would be prohibited in the Wilderness.

WLD 25: Geocaching would be prohibited in the Wilderness.

WLD 26: Commercial SRPs would be issued in the Wilderness on a case-by-case basis, however no competitive or vending SRPs would be issued.

WLD 27: Hunting would be prohibited within the Petroglyph Management Area and its northern access.

Signage and Developments

Inside the Petroglyph Management Area, limited amounts of small signage and interpretive media could be located for the purposes of resource and wilderness protection.

WLD 28: Access signage in the Wilderness indicating that access to the Petroglyph Management Area is restricted to permitted access or guided tours only beyond a certain point would be placed at various places, including the south end of the Petroglyph Management Area.

WLD 29: Interpretive and administrative signs (e.g., trailhead signage and visitor registers) would, in general, be located on high-use access routes outside the Wilderness boundary.

WLD 30: Trailhead signage located outside the Wilderness would consist of low-profile, natural-colored signs and would include pertinent information such as route details, maps, and visitor information.

WLD 31: Wilderness boundary signage would be installed at all known and potential access routes, visitor use areas, and at line-of-sight distances along the entire Wilderness boundary.

WLD 32: Minimum permanent developments would be allowed in the Wilderness only for the purpose of resource protection and enhancement of wilderness values.

Wilderness Disturbance Restoration

WLD 33: Human caused disturbances or developments, such as two-track vehicle routes, rock and mortar dam, and the dug well within the Wilderness, would be rehabilitated within four years of the ROD using appropriate resources determined through a minimum requirement/minimum tool analysis for each

rehabilitation project. Any new vandalism and illegal dumping within the Wilderness would be removed or repaired using the same process.

WLD 34: Noxious and invasive weeds would be managed in accordance with the *Partners Against Weeds—An Action Plan for BLM* (BLM 1996) initiative for weeds.

Aircraft Overflights

BLM does not have administrative jurisdiction of the airspace above the Sloan Canyon NCA and Wilderness. The use of aircraft is only regulated by BLM if an aircraft lands or if anything/anyone is picked up for dropped off by means of an aircraft. The Sloan Canyon NCA Act specifically allows military overflights of the Wilderness. Flight testing and evaluation, designation or creation of new units of special use airspace, or establishment of training routes are not precluded. The highest percentage of low-level overflights of the Wilderness is from scenic tours originating from local area airports, although private flights from Henderson Executive Airport, located several miles from the northern Wilderness boundary, also contribute. In addition, commercial flights from McCarran International Airport pass directly over the Wilderness, although they tend to be localized to the western edge and at an altitude of more than 4,000 feet.

Overflights conducted by BLM within the NCA or wilderness would be designed to minimize impacts to NCA or wilderness characteristics. These overflights would be primarily for NCA or wilderness monitoring purposes, (e.g., checking for new disturbances and unauthorized vehicle use), however helicopters could be used to deliver personnel or materials for the purposes of the NCA in conformance with the Sloan Canyon NCA Act; Wilderness Act; and North McCullough Wilderness Management Plan, Appendix C.

WLD 35: All BLM-administered Wilderness overflights would be conducted to minimize impacts to wilderness characteristics.

WLD 36: Access to the North McCullough Slickrock Catchment 1 (Maintenance Project 4916) would be managed in accordance with the MOU with NDOW and an environmental assessment written for its installment. Significant repairs to the catchment would include notifying BLM, and the analyzing of the proposed action through a minimum tool analysis.

2.4.4 Cultural Resources

Goals

- Identify and protect cultural resources and ensure that representative resources are available for the benefit of present and future generations.
- Reduce imminent threats from natural or human-caused deterioration, or potential conflict with other resource uses.
- Actively pursue opportunities for scientific research to understand and interpret human use of the NCA and surrounding region.
- Provide for traditional tribal use of the Sloan Canyon Petroglyph Site and consider other locations of traditional cultural importance that may be identified in the future.

Objectives

- Develop educational and interpretive outreach programs to help prevent cultural resources from being disturbed or damaged.
- Interpret the history and prehistory of the NCA to help instill an appreciation for past and current cultures and the values that living cultures associate with the resources of the NCA.
- Develop cooperative efforts with educational institutions, students, tribes, and others for scientific studies, educational opportunities, and enhanced management of the NCA's cultural resources.
- Continue good working relationships with interested Native American tribes.

Management Direction

All proposed actions within the NCA would be subject to compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act in accordance with the Nevada BLM/State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) Protocol, Archaeological Resource Protection Act, Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, and other appropriate mandates. In accordance with the American Indian Religious Freedom Act, BLM would ensure that policies enacted under this plan would not inadvertently impair the ability of Native Americans to access the Sloan Canyon Petroglyph Site for traditional cultural purposes. Management actions related to the cultural resource sites within the Wilderness would be within the limits prescribed by the Wilderness Management Plan (Appendix C), and the Clark County Act, Title II ("Wilderness Areas").

The Cultural Resources Management Plan in Appendix D contains key elements for management of cultural resources during the first stage of implementation of the Proposed Plan. The key elements are—

- A cultural context and relevant research questions for archaeological and ethnographic work that may be conducted in early stages of developing the NCA.
- A treatment protocol to be implemented in the event that Native American human remains are discovered.
- A monitoring plan to establish baseline data and track effects on cultural resources as public use of the NCA grows.

Cultural resources within the NCA would be managed based on use categories, as defined below.

Scientific Use—This category applies to any cultural property determined to be available for consideration as the subject of scientific or historical study at the present time, using currently available research techniques. Study includes methods that would result in the property's physical alteration or destruction. This category applies almost entirely to prehistoric and historic archaeological properties, where the method of use is generally archaeological excavation, controlled surface collection, and/or controlled recordation (data recovery). Recommendations to allocate individual properties to this use must be based on documentation of the kinds of data the property is thought to contain and the data's importance for pursuing specified research topics. Properties in this category need not be conserved in the face of a research or data recovery (mitigation) proposal that would make adequate and appropriate use of the property's research importance.

Public Use—This category may be applied to any cultural property found to be appropriate for use as an interpretive exhibit in place, or for related educational and recreational uses by members of the general public.

Traditional Use—This category is to be applied to any cultural resource known to be perceived by a specified social and/or cultural group as important in maintaining the cultural identity, heritage, or well-being of the group. Cultural properties assigned to this category are to be managed in ways that recognize the importance ascribed to them and seek to accommodate their continuing traditional use.

Conservation for Future Use—This category is reserved for any unusual cultural property which, because of scarcity, a research potential that surpasses the current state-of-the-art, singular historic importance, cultural importance, architectural interest, or comparable reasons, is not currently available for consideration as the subject of scientific or historical study that would result in its physical alteration. A cultural property included in this category is deemed worthy of segregation from all other land or resource uses, including cultural resource uses, that would threaten the maintenance of its present condition or setting, as pertinent, and would remain in this use category until specified provisions are met in the future.

CR 1: All physical contact with petroglyphs, such as touching, chalking, and making impressions through rubbings or casting would be prohibited except for traditional cultural purposes with a special use permit.

CR 2: Scientific research may be allowed under permit.

CR 3: Approximately half the rockshelters in the NCA would be assigned to the conservation for future use and traditional use management categories. The remainder of rockshelters would be assigned to the scientific, public, and traditional use categories. Rock art locales (other than the Sloan Canyon Petroglyph Site) would follow a similar pattern, with half assigned to the conservation for future use and traditional use management categories and the remainder assigned to the conservation for future use, scientific use, and traditional use categories.

CR 4: Approximately half of other prehistoric and historic sites would be assigned to conservation for future use and traditional use, and the remaining sites would be assigned to scientific, public, and traditional use management categories. Ineligible sites and isolates would be assigned to the scientific use management categories.

CR 5: The Sloan Canyon Petroglyph Site would be assigned to the traditional, conservation, public, and scientific use categories.

CR 6: In areas identified as having a medium to high potential for cultural resource sites (Duke et al. 2004), a Class III cultural resources inventory (100 percent) would be required prior to any land disturbing undertaking.

CR 7: For areas with a low potential density for cultural resource sites, a reconnaissance-level inventory would be required prior to land disturbing activities. Areas with a low potential would be considered for elimination of inventory requirements when sufficient information is available.

CR 8: Maximum fire suppression would be utilized in the Petroglyph Management Area and Wilderness areas with a high or medium potential for cultural resources would utilize flexible fire suppression, with a cultural resource advisor assigned to the fire.

CR 9: In areas with low potential for cultural resources, fire control would be discretionary, and actions would be in conformance with the *Fire Management Plan* (BLM 2004b) and Wilderness limitations. A resource advisor is required for all fires within the NCA.

2.4.5 Special Designations—Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

Goal

Protect areas with relevant and important cultural, natural, or geological values.

Objective

Develop management prescriptions to protect the important values of the NCA.

Management Direction

The Sloan Canyon Petroglyph Site would be managed to ensure regulatory compliance in accordance with the management prescriptions established through this RMP. These prescriptions supersede the prior area of critical environmental concern (ACEC) designations, providing a greater degree of protection and management.

ACEC 1: The Sloan Rock Art District ACEC designation would be eliminated.

2.4.6 Visual Resources

Goal

Manage all activities in a manner that conserves, protects, and enhances the NCA's scenic resources.

Objective

Manage activities within the NCA to adhere to the Visual Resource Management (VRM) class objectives.

Management Direction

VR 1: Signage, structures, and facilities would be designed in accordance with applicable VRM objectives.

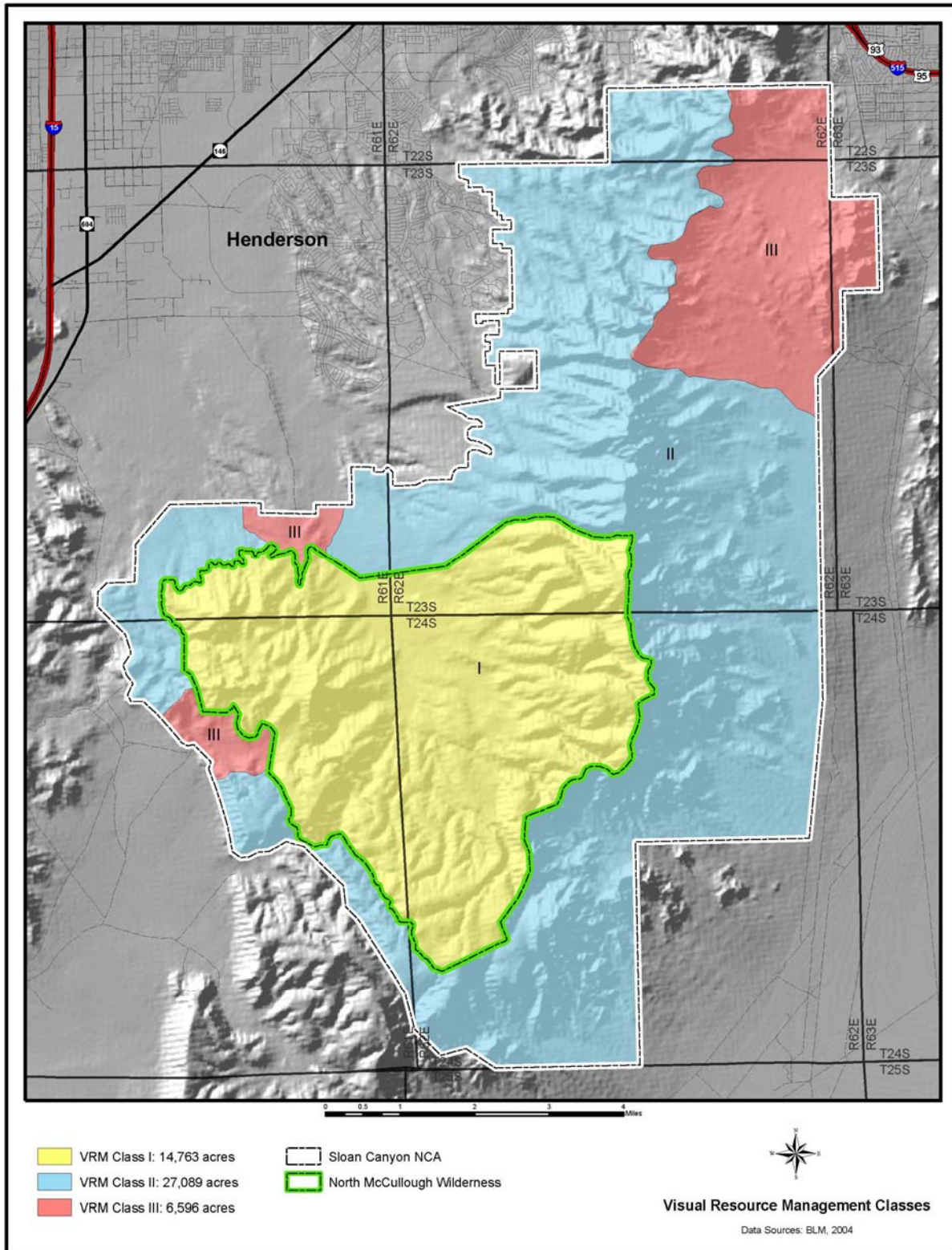
VR 2: VRM classes would be based on the Visual Resource Inventory, as described in Appendix E, including designating the North McCullough Wilderness as VRM Class I.

VR 3: VRM classes would be designated as shown on the VRM Classes Map (Figure 2.9).

VR 4: The following VRM class definitions would be used:

- **VRM I**—Preserve the existing character of the landscape. Authorized actions may not modify the existing landscape or attract the attention of casual viewers.
- **VRM II**—Retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be low and may not attract the attention of casual viewers.
- **VRM III**—Partially retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be moderate and may minimally attract the attention of the casual viewer.

Figure 2.9. Visual Resource Management Classes



2.4.7 Interpretation

Goal

Provide opportunities for users, both onsite and offsite, to develop an appreciation of the NCA's resources through informational and inspiring interpretative experiences.

Objectives

- Provide a variety of opportunities for education, accurate information, and interpretation that meets the user's needs (e.g., tours, kiosks, brochures, virtual tours, website, libraries, community outreach, etc.).
- Provide visitors with information on traditional uses that would be developed with interested tribes.
- Provide interpretation that promotes stewardship behavior in users so they would act in a way that minimizes impacts to the NCA's resources.
- Provide information, guidance, and regulations for visits and orientation to facilities.
- Increase public awareness of management goals for the NCA.

Management Direction

Based, in part, on the Interpretive Strategy and Environmental Education Strategy developed as part of this planning process (Appendix F), a Comprehensive Interpretive Plan would be developed for the NCA. As encouraged in the Interpretive Strategy, partnerships would be developed with tribes, cooperating agencies, not-for-profit organizations, and volunteer organizations when conducting interpretation, outreach, education, and facility planning.

As required by the Sloan Canyon NCA Act, this PRMP contains a Litter Cleanup Plan and Public Lands Awareness Campaign (Appendix G). The plan describes a program that could include concepts such as developing partnerships with federal, State, and local agencies; increasing volunteer involvement; preparing educational material; and increasing enforcement.

INT 1: A program would be implemented to remove litter from the NCA and to prevent future dumping through education and enforcement.

INT 2: A full range of interpretive media would be provided, with media visibility decreasing as the distance from developed areas increases.

INT 3: Stationary interpretive media would be limited to specific areas identified for interpretation and designed to reduce visual impacts.

INT 4: Outside the Wilderness, the use of low-profile, visually unobtrusive interpretive media would be allowed in areas of high use. There would be a focus on highly visible media at staging areas (trailheads, visitor contact station, visitor center).

INT 5: Inside the Wilderness, limited amounts of small signage and interpretive media could be located within the Petroglyph Management Area for the purposes of resource and wilderness protection.

INT 6: Access signage in the Wilderness indicating that access to the Petroglyph Management Area is restricted to permitted access or guided tours only beyond a certain point, would be placed at various points, including the south end of the Petroglyph Management Area.

INT 7: Media, such as virtual tours, would be developed to provide opportunities for education and interpretation at the visitor center for those unable to access the Petroglyph Management Area or other remote areas of the NCA, and for use at times when weather, such as extreme summer heat or other conditions, limit normal access. Such media would serve the dual purpose of reducing impacts to resources and enhancing wilderness experience. In general there would be a focus on the use of interactive virtual interpretation media, such as websites.

2.4.8 Facilities

Goal

Enhance visitor use and experience by providing appropriate facilities compatible with the character and characteristics of the NCA's resources.

Objectives

- Provide appropriate access points with relevant interpretive opportunities, signage, mapping, and information specific to that area.
- Provide appropriate facilities and/or infrastructure to support management of the NCA.

Management Direction

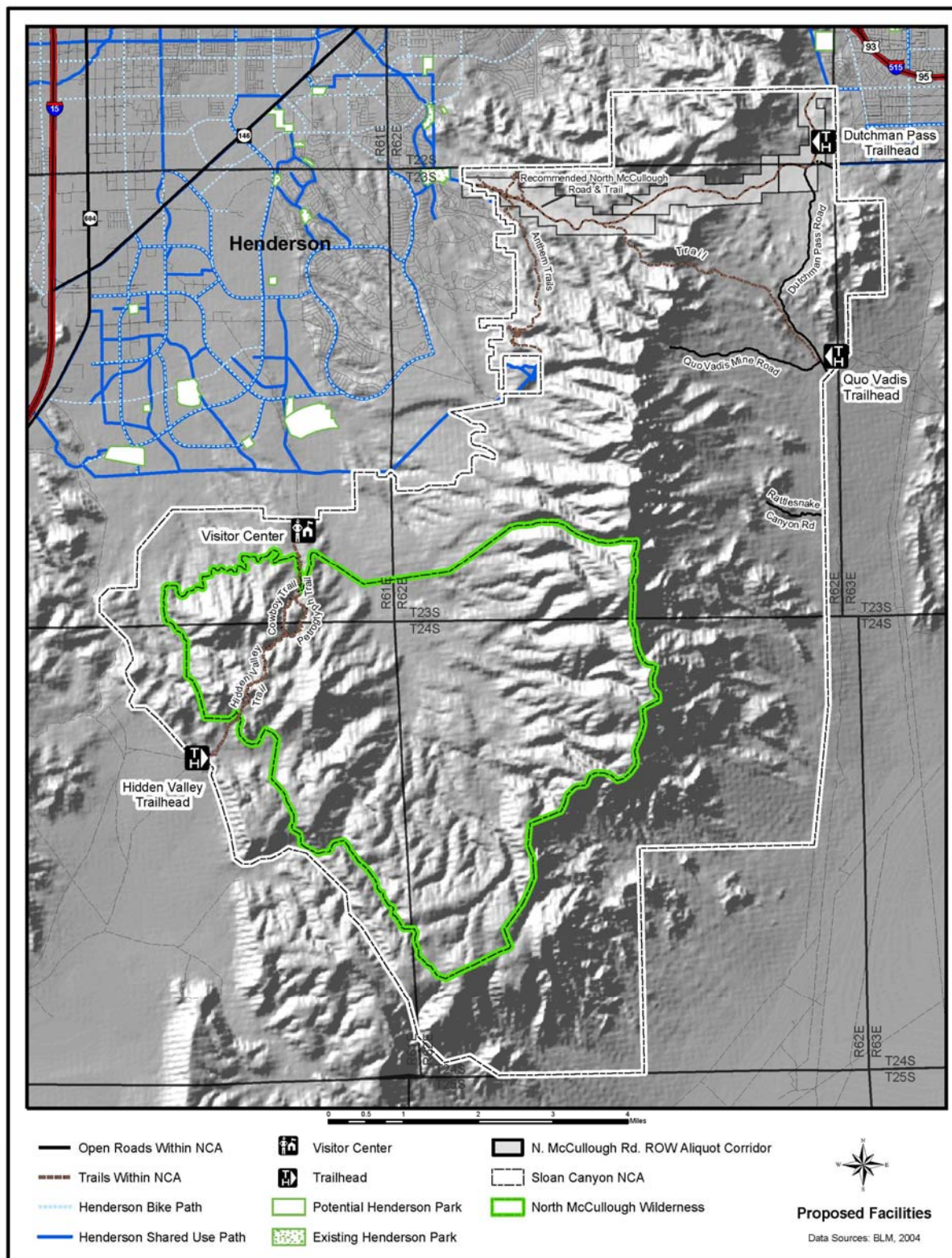
Developed access points into the NCA would include the northern entrance of Sloan Canyon, Hidden Valley Trailhead, Dutchman Pass Trailhead, and the Quo Vadis Trailhead. Figure 2.10, Proposed Facilities Map, depicts the locations of these facilities. Information on the NCA could be provided at facilities located outside the NCA, for example at schools and libraries located throughout the City of Henderson. Additional trails and facilities could be added throughout the NCA, as needed, in accordance with the applicable MEA objectives. The facilities would be planned, designed, and constructed through a systematic process that would evaluate needs, potential uses, and public interest as well as the preparation of an environmental assessment.

Northern Entrance of Sloan Canyon

A conceptual model for a visitor center is presented here for analysis purposes. The total disturbed area, including a 2-acre parking area, was assumed to be 20 acres. The areas and activities for the visitor center are based on input received from the public and cooperating agencies.

The visitor center could provide NCA management with office space, serve as one of the access and control points for the Petroglyph Management Area, and be the base of operations for patrols and rangers. The central theme of the visitor center could be the NCA's association with Native Americans including the Sloan Canyon Petroglyph Site and the tribes who have been involved in the planning process. The tribes would be invited to continue association with the NCA as interpretative media is developed and participate in the design of the visitor center, which could include design elements to facilitate ongoing Native American use and/or events.

Figure 2.10. Proposed Facilities



The visitor center could include offsite space for BLM staff, law enforcement, volunteers, and visiting scholars and researchers, and a visitor permit window or desk. The center could have facilities for maintenance and storage, areas for interpretive use, an outdoor amphitheater, classrooms, research facilities, archival storage, a book store/gift shop, meeting rooms, and concessions.

FAC 1: A visitor center could be constructed near the NCA boundary at the north entrance to Sloan Canyon.

FAC 2: A business plan would be developed for the NCA that would explore income-generating facilities, including space in the visitor center to be leased for food/restaurant facilities and the viability of day rentals of space for meetings or small corporate retreats.

Hidden Valley Trailhead

For analysis purposes, the total disturbed area is assumed to be 10,500 square feet. A parking lot, an interpretive kiosk, and a vault toilet would be constructed inside the NCA boundary.

FAC 3: A trailhead could be constructed near the NCA boundary at Hidden Valley.

Dutchman Pass Trailhead

A parking lot, an equestrian staging area, an interpretive kiosk, and a vault toilet would be constructed near the northeastern boundary of the NCA at Dutchman Pass. For analysis purposes, the total disturbed area was assumed to be 22,500 square feet.

FAC 4: A trailhead could be constructed at Dutchman Pass Trailhead.

Quo Vadis Trailhead

A 1/2-acre parking lot would be constructed, with an interpretive kiosk and vault toilet.

FAC 5: A trailhead could be constructed at Quo Vadis.

2.4.9 Lands and Realty

Goal

Manage land and realty actions within the NCA in accordance with the Sloan Canyon NCA Act and the Clark County Act, Title II (“Wilderness Areas”).

Objective

Allow only development and establishment of new interests within the NCA that are consistent with the intent of the Sloan Canyon NCA Act.

Management Direction

In accordance with the Sloan Canyon NCA Act, all existing rights at the time of passage of the Clark County Act (November 6, 2002) are recognized. The North McCullough Wilderness, which includes the Petroglyph Management Area, is an exclusion area for all types of ROWs.

LAND 1: Existing communication ROWs may be renewed at the end of their term in accordance with the *Black Mountain Communication Site Plan* (BLM 1999) and current regulations, and may be updated or modified to meet the intent of the Sloan Canyon NCA Act. No new communication sites would be authorized under the Sloan Canyon NCA Act.

LAND 2: Other valid existing ROW grants may also be renewed at the end of the term and modified to meet the intent of the Sloan Canyon NCA Act and current regulations. If a subleasing right, such as one for fiber optics, existed as of November 6, 2002, that right continues. New ROWs or amendments to existing ROWs would be considered on a case-by-case basis and authorized only if they serve the purposes of the NCA.

LAND 3: Outside the Wilderness, applications for new linear or site-type ROWs, or any amendments to existing ROWs, would be considered on a case-by-case basis within the NCA if the action furthers the purpose of the NCA in Section 602 of the Sloan Canyon NCA Act (Figure 2.11).

Evaluation criteria could include, in part—

- Direct benefit to the NCA, such as utilities to serve NCA facilities.
- Maintaining or decreasing visual contrast.
- Reduction of disturbed areas.
- Improvement in road/ROW alignments to minimize resource impacts.

LAND 4: Commercial filming permits could be allowed in the NCA, outside of Wilderness, with location, timing, vehicle, and crew size restrictions. Film permits would be limited to proposed trails and trailheads and would not be allowed in the Petroglyph Management Area. Filming would be prohibited on weekends and federal holidays. In addition vehicles associated with the permit may not occupy more than half of the parking area capacity and would not be allowed to create new ground disturbances. The

crew size would be limited to a maximum of 15 people per permit for still photography and a maximum of 15 people per permit for motion photography.

LAND 5 : Special Use Permits (2920 Permits) would be allowed if they meet the intent of the Sloan Canyon NCA Act. Special Use Permits are issued for purposes such as temporary or permanent facilities for commercial purposes and construction equipment storage sites (43 CFR 2920).

2.4.10 Transportation (Registered Motorized Vehicles)

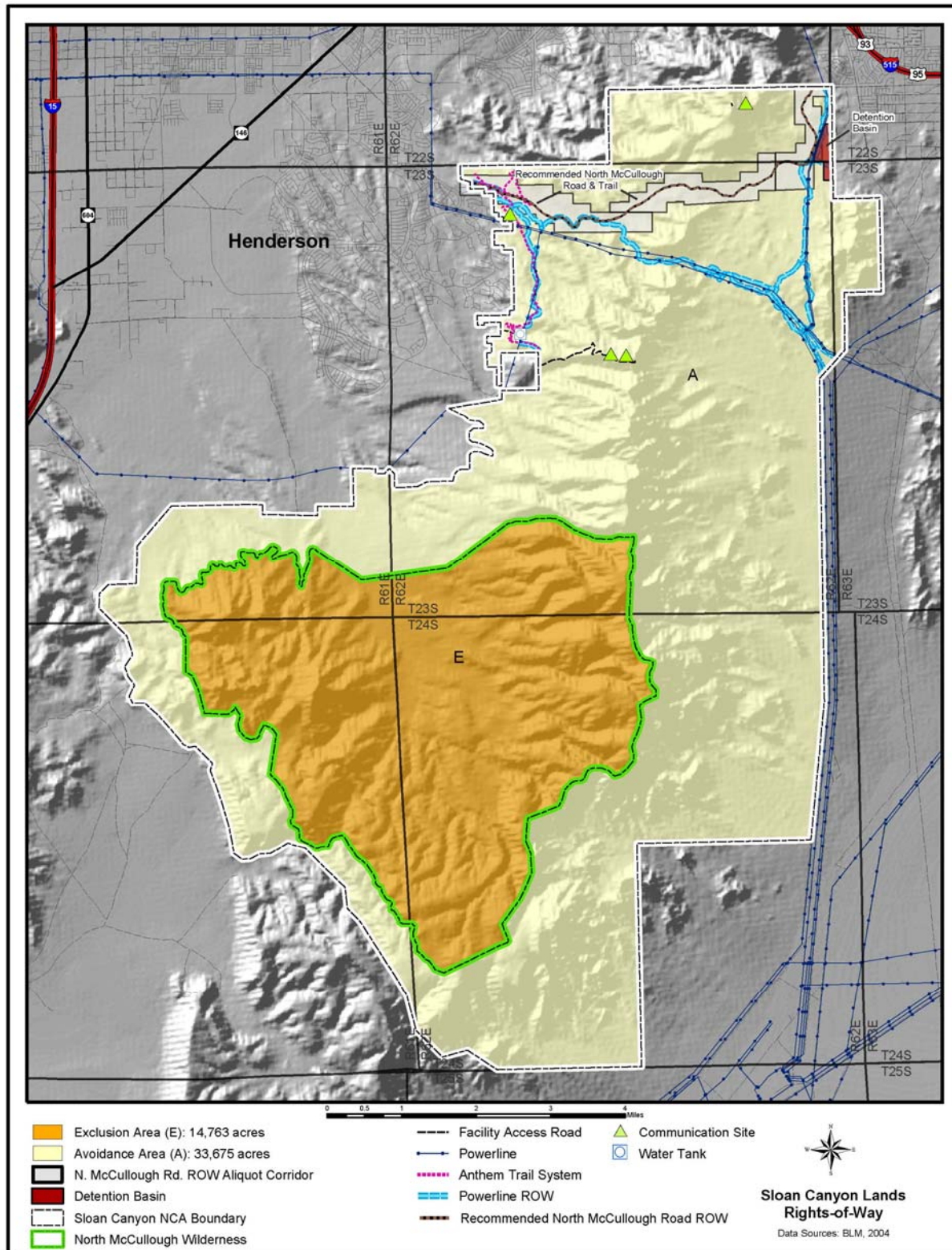
Goal

Provide public and administrative access to the NCA.

Objective

Provide and maintain a system of roads and routes for registered motorized vehicles within the NCA but outside the North McCullough Wilderness.

Figure 2.11. Sloan Canyon Lands Rights-of-Way



Management Direction

All roads and routes not designated for public use could be physically barricaded, signed, or restored to natural conditions. BLM or its designee may use any existing road, route, or trail outside the Wilderness for administrative or emergency purposes. Motorized vehicles could be authorized for installing, maintaining, and reconstructing water development projects outside the Wilderness, including guzzlers, that would enhance the NCA by promoting healthy, viable, and more naturally distributed wildlife populations, subject to existing laws, regulations, policies, plans, or agreements.

The North McCullough Road, Dutchman Pass Road, Quo Vadis Mine Road, and Rattlesnake Canyon Road would be open to the public for registered vehicles as shown in Figure 2.12, Sloan Canyon Roads—Registered Motorized Vehicles Map. All other roads and routes would be closed to the public for registered vehicle use.

2.4.11 Vegetation Management (including Special Status Species)

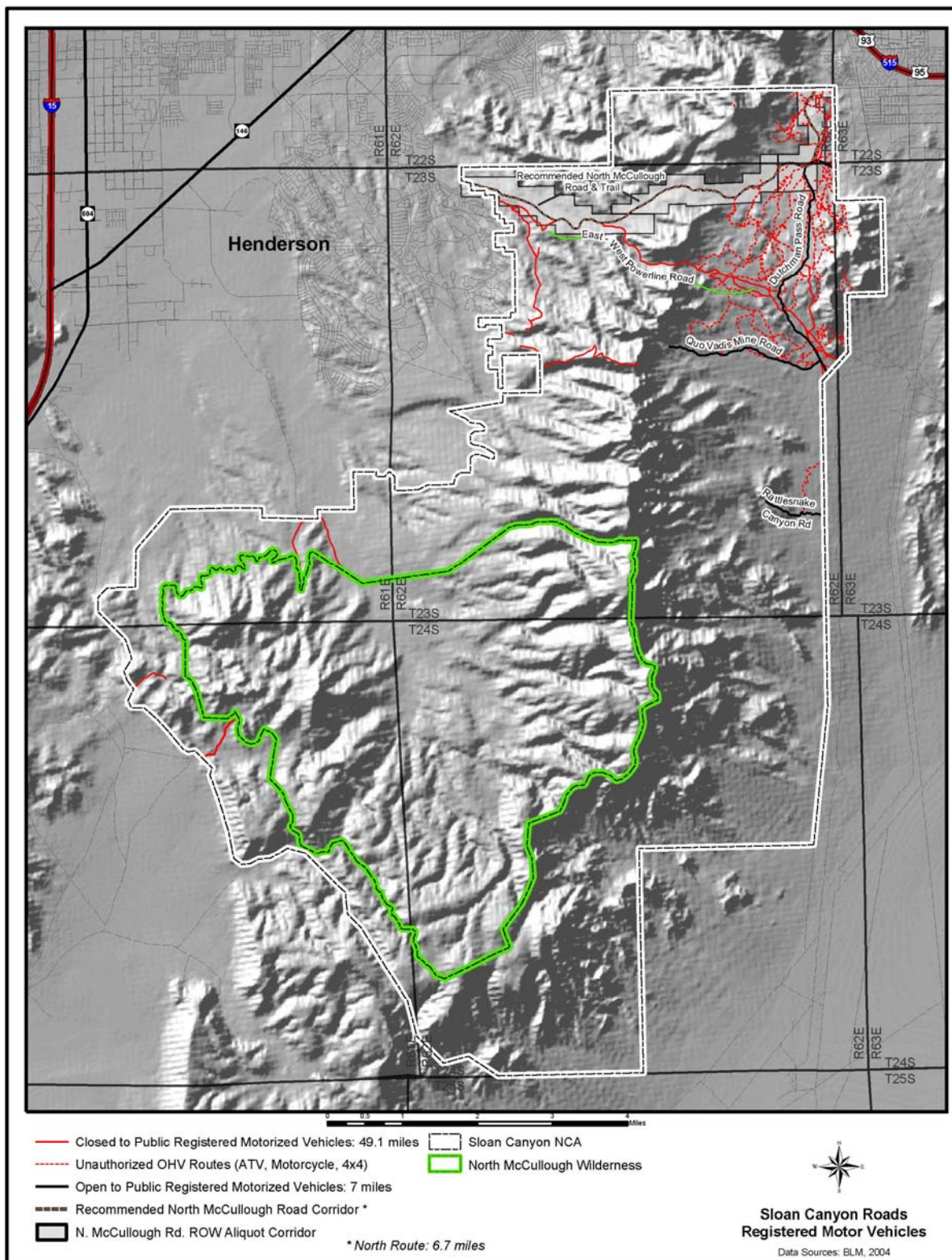
Goals

- Manage the NCA to maintain or improve the condition of native vegetation to achieve a potential natural community when consistent with other goals and objectives for the NCA.
- Establish an integrated weed management program by cooperating with State and county weed programs and building cooperative weed management areas to implement the goals of the *Partners Against Weeds—An Action Plan for the BLM* (BLM 1996) initiative.

Objectives

- Manage to protect priority plant species and habitats, including federally listed, State-sensitive, and MSHCP (CCDCP 2000) species within the NCA.
- Place a priority on the use of native plant species for vegetation restoration and landscaping developed areas.
- Protect the natural condition and biodiversity of the NCA by preventing or limiting the spread of noxious and invasive weeds that displace native vegetation, through integrated weed management principals to detect and eradicate all existing infestations, eliminate new infestations before they begin to spread, and prevent or limit the spread of established weeds into areas containing little or no infestations.
- Prevent the increase of total acres dominated by invasive annual species within the NCA.

Figure 2.12. Sloan Canyon Roads Registered Motorized Vehicles



Management Direction

Vegetation would be managed by restoration zones based on MEAs to promote native plant communities and restore the plant productivity of disturbed areas through restoration. The threshold of disturbance before restoring the natural vegetation community or improving the condition of native plant communities for each zone would be as follows and is shown in Figure 2.13, Vegetation Disturbance Management Map:

- Zone 1 (Primitive MEA)—Conduct restoration if the surface disturbing activity may alter the natural vegetation community processes or if it reduces the viability of local species populations.
- Zone 2 (Semi-Primitive, Non-Motorized MEA)—Conduct restoration if the surface disturbing activity may have a short-term impact on natural vegetation community processes or if it reduces the viability of local species populations.
- Zone 3 (Roaded Natural and Developed MEAs)—Conduct restoration if the surface disturbing activity may have a long-term impact on natural vegetation community processes or if it could have a long-term impact on local species populations.

VEG 1: Manage vegetation restoration by zone, as shown in Figure 2.13.

VEG 2: Restoration projects would take priority in Zones 1 and 2 to restore or improve conditions in native plant communities (Appendix H, Vegetation Restoration Strategy).

VEG 3: Disturbed areas in the North McCullough Wilderness would be restored after completion of a minimum requirement/minimum tool analysis.

VEG 4: Commercial and casual collection of vegetation would be prohibited throughout the NCA.

VEG 5: Sensitive and Special Status Species habitats would be protected to ensure suitable habitat conditions and population viability.

VEG 6: Scientific research and monitoring of Special Status Species would be encouraged. BLM would develop partnerships with organizations such as universities and other educational groups to facilitate research on and monitoring of Special Status Species.

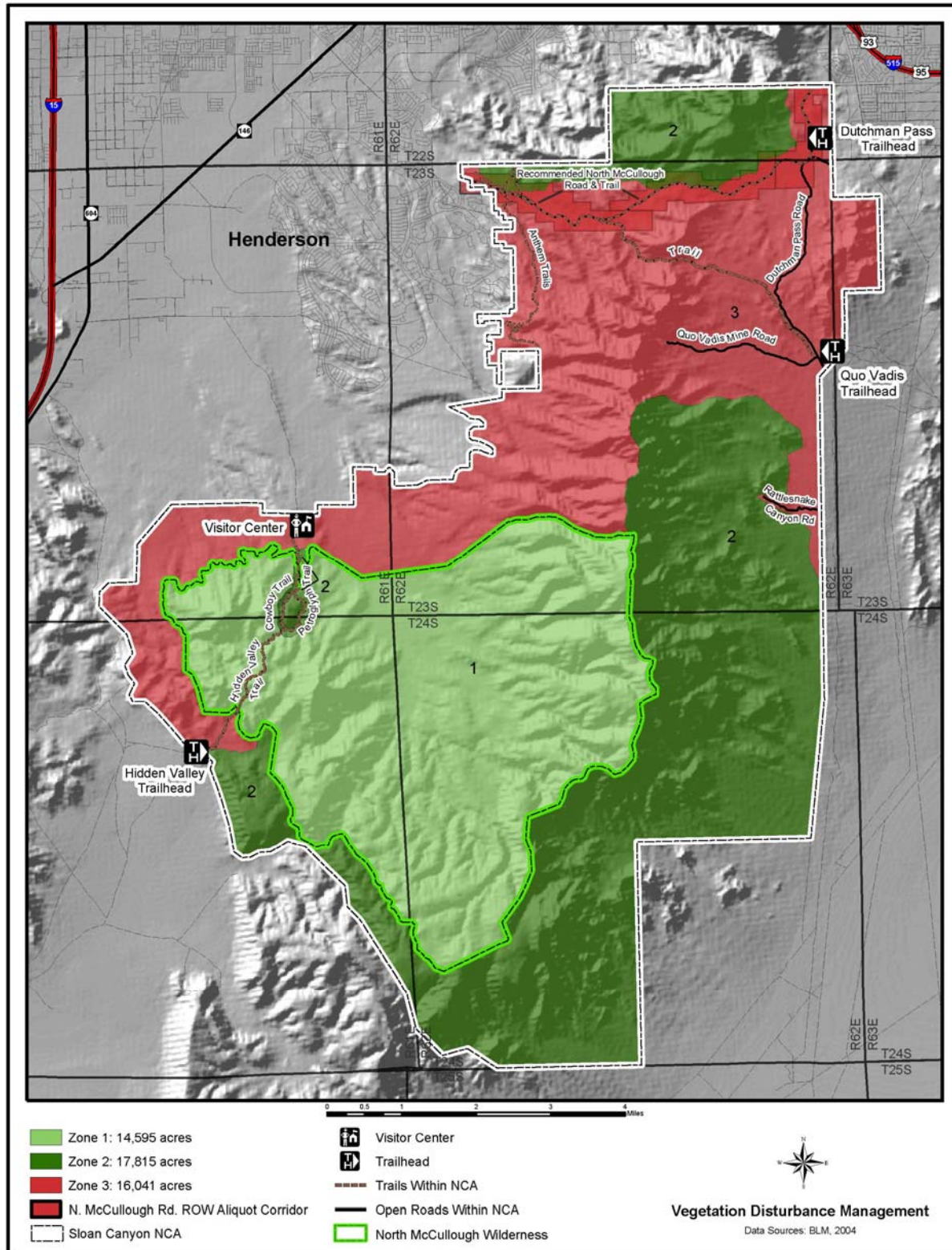
VEG 7: Any developed landscaping would use only plant species native to the NCA.

VEG 8: Sites proposed for disturbance would be evaluated for the presence of Special Status Plant Species. In addition, surface disturbing activities within known locations of federally listed plant species would be avoided, if feasible.

VEG 9: BLM would continue ongoing efforts to survey, monitor, and manage invasive and noxious weeds using integrated weed management principals. This includes working with local organizations, agencies, and landowners to promote education and to assist in managing weeds.

VEG 10: The collection of vegetation for scientific purposes would be authorized on a case-by-case basis.

Figure 2.13. Vegetation Disturbance Management



2.4.12 Wildlife Management (including Special Status Species)

Goal

Maintain and enhance native wildlife resources and provide for biological diversity of wildlife resources while ensuring healthy ecosystems.

Objectives

- Manage to protect Special Status Wildlife Species and habitats in the NCA, including federally listed, State-sensitive, and *MSHCP* species, according to existing law, regulation, policy, and/or agreement.
- Maintain or enhance habitat quality and quantity to adequately support the life history requirements of a diversity of wildlife species.
- Promote healthy and viable wildlife populations through appropriate habitat and species management actions that would lead to providing for ecological integrity within the NCA.
- Protect important migratory bird habitat according to existing law, regulation, policy, and/or agreement.
- Maintain lambing areas and movement corridors for bighorn sheep.

Management Direction

BLM would work cooperatively with NDOW and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service/Wildlife Services in the management of wildlife (including Special Status and Sensitive Species, hunting, and trapping), recognizing their respective management jurisdictions. Specifically BLM would coordinate with NDOW in providing habitat for maintenance of population objectives and management activities designed to moderate populations (e.g., hunting, trapping, and transfer). For example, BLM would manage bighorn sheep habitat to promote healthy and viable populations consistent with the *Rangewide Plan for Managing Bighorn Sheep Habitat on Public Lands* (BLM 1998c). BLM would also follow the objectives of the *MSHCP* (CCDCP 2000) to maintain or improve current and potential wildlife habitat toward full ecological potential. In addition BLM has developed a Biological Management Strategy (Appendix I) to guide the research and monitoring of wildlife species found within the NCA.

Within the North McCullough Wilderness, BLM would follow its MOU with NDOW for wildlife management in the Wilderness (BLM 2003c) or other applicable agreement policy.

WLIFE 1: BLM would enhance wilderness values by maintaining existing water developments to promote healthy, viable, and more naturally distributed wildlife populations; constructing additional water developments if appropriate; and protecting or improving springs and seeps consistent with the MOU and applicable laws and regulations.

WLIFE 2: The construction and maintenance of wildlife water developments would be consistent with the intent of the Clark County Act, Title II (“Wilderness Areas”) and the Wilderness Act of 1964. A 1/4-mile radius avoidance area for recreation developments, including trails, would be established to protect artificial and natural waters that provide benefit to wildlife. BLM would also prohibit livestock watering at wildlife water developments.

WLIFE 3: BLM would allow animal damage control activities, if necessary, on a temporary basis for the successful reestablishment of native species, for the recovery of decimated populations, and to manage urban interface wildlife conflicts.

WLIFE 4: To better understand the NCA's wildlife, BLM would implement monitoring surveys for appropriate species, and wildlife observation studies would be allowed in the NCA as long as the study does not harass species.

WLIFE 5: Interpretive information designed to mitigate the potential effects of recreation use on wildlife would be developed and distributed within the NCA.

WLIFE 6: Designation and construction of trails, facilities, and ROWs would be limited within known lambing areas of bighorn sheep. Surface disturbing activities would be limited within known lambing areas from January through May. Trail construction would be avoided in areas of known bighorn sheep movement between the North and South McCullough Mountains.

WLIFE 7: Permits for wildlife specimen collection would be issued for scientific purposes on a case-by-case basis. All applicants who intend to collect specimens of listed species would be required to obtain additional permits from NDOW and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

WLIFE 8: Casual and commercial collection of reptiles would be prohibited throughout the NCA.

Distance and seasonal restrictions for sensitive raptor nesting areas and lambing areas would be determined on a case-by-case basis and could depend on the species involved, natural topographic barriers, and line-of-sight distances.

WLIFE 9: Visitors would be educated to be sensitive to raptor nesting areas during breeding season and bighorn lambing areas from January to May.

WLIFE 10: Construction of trails, facilities, or ROWs would be seasonally restricted within an appropriate distance of occupied raptor nesting sites. Trails would be closed using seasonal or small area closures on a case-by-case basis to protect wildlife species during critical life periods.

WLIFE 11: Feral animals, including wild horses and burros, would be removed from the NCA by coordinating with appropriate local, State, and federal agencies on the trapping and transfer of populations of animals posing a threat to wildlife health or human health and safety.

WLIFE 12: Bird feeders would be prohibited within the NCA.

WLIFE 13: Special Status Species habitat would be maintained and protected to ensure suitable habitat conditions and viable populations. Disturbance or development would be avoided in areas of Special Status Species potential habitat. Disturbance or development would be mitigated in areas of Special Status Species habitat discovered during preactivity site-specific surveys.

WLIFE 14: BLM would encourage scientific research and monitoring of Special Status Species and encourage research partnerships with organizations such as universities and other educational groups.

2.4.13 Wildland Fire Management

Goals

- Manage fire to protect human health and property.
- Manage fire to keep wildland fire size to an absolute minimum to prevent conversion to red brome and other non-native grasses.

Objective

Protect human health and property.

Management Direction

Using the appropriate management response, BLM would provide wildland fire suppression efforts commensurate with resources and risk to adjacent property values. Education, law enforcement, and public outreach would be used to prevent or minimize risk of human-caused fires. Maximum fire protection would be provided through a comprehensive fire detection system using a multiagency approach.

FIRE 1: An NCA staff resource advisor would be consulted on all fires in the NCA. For specific fire suppression guidance, BLM would follow the *Fire Management Plan* (BLM 2004b).

2.4.14 Water Resources and Quality

Goal

Ensure NCA activities protect water resources and quality.

Objectives

- Manage and protect springs and water sources within the NCA.
- Maintain or improve the water quality within the NCA.

2.4.15 Air Quality

Goal/Objective

Ensure that emissions associated with NCA activities meet federal, State, and local air quality regulations and standards.

2.4.16 Livestock Grazing

Goal

Manage authorized livestock grazing consistent with the purposes of the Sloan Canyon NCA Act and the Clark County Act, Title II (“Wilderness Areas”).

Objective

Manage livestock grazing in the Sloan Canyon NCA to attain the Standards—desired rangeland conditions, and expressions of physical and biological conditions required for sustaining rangelands for multiple uses, as approved in Nevada’s *Mojave-Southern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council (RAC)*, *Standards and Guidelines for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Administration* (BLM 1997).

Management Direction

GRAZ 1: If on-the-ground evaluations determine that forage is available, BLM would allow livestock grazing in the Hidden Valley Allotment, consistent with allotment-specific objectives.

GRAZ 2: Grazing in the allotment would continue unless the permittee voluntarily relinquishes the privilege, permits, or leases, in which case the allotment would be closed to further livestock grazing.

GRAZ 3: Cattle are the only class of livestock authorized to graze on the Hidden Valley Allotment. Horses may be kept in corrals and used to perform ranch-related work.

GRAZ 4: BLM would manage the range resource consistent with the phenological and physiological requirements of key perennial species. Livestock grazing management would provide for increased plant vigor and reproductive capability of perennial forage to either maintain a static trend or achieve an upward trend of key perennial forage.

GRAZ 5: Placement of salt and mineral supplements and new range improvements would not be allowed within the NCA.

2.4.17 Geology and Soils

Goals

- Conserve and protect geological and soil resources within the NCA.
- Provide opportunities for scientific research within the NCA to understand and interpret the NCA’s geologic history.

Objective

Manage activities within the NCA to maintain natural rates of soil loss and sedimentation.

Management Direction

GEO 1: Intrusive geologic research would be allowed in the NCA by permit to ensure regulatory compliance.

GEO 2: Intrusive geologic research would be prohibited in the Petroglyph Management Area and its northern access, and appropriate restrictions would apply in the remainder of the Wilderness.

2.4.18 Minerals

Goal/Objective

Recognize valid existing mineral rights in accordance with existing law, regulation, and policy.

2.4.19 Abandoned Mines

Goal/Objective

Reduce potential safety hazards associated with abandoned mines.

Management Direction

BLM would ensure that abandoned mine hazards are considered during planning, design, and construction of NCA facilities. When consistent with other resource objectives, abandoned mines would be closed.

2.4.20 Hazardous Materials

Goal

Reduce potential for hazardous materials contamination within the NCA.

Objectives

- Prevent illegal disposal of hazardous materials.
- Ensure that NCA management actions are designed to minimize hazardous waste generation and prevent pollution.
- Assess the impacts of released hazardous materials and determine the appropriate response, removal, and remedial actions.

2.5 MANAGEMENT ACTIONS CONSIDERED BUT NOT INCLUDED

During the public scoping process and discussions with cooperating agencies, numerous possible management actions were raised for BLM consideration. As part of the development of reasonable alternatives, the planning team rigorously explored and objectively evaluated all the suggested actions. This section identifies the actions that were eliminated from further consideration and provides a brief explanation of the reasons for elimination. In general, actions were eliminated if they did not comply with the purpose and intent of the Sloan Canyon NCA Act and other laws, regulations, and policy.

2.5.1 Extensive OHV Trail System

Much of the northern and western portion of the NCA lies within the Clark County Air Quality Nonattainment area for particulate matter (PM₁₀). Additional OHV trail systems and “play” areas were not considered because the purpose of Sloan Canyon NCA, as directed by Congress in the Sloan Canyon NCA Act, Subsection 602, is “to conserve, protect, and enhance for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations the cultural, archaeological, natural, wilderness, scientific, geological, historical, biological, wildlife, educational, and scenic resources of the Conservation Area.” Subsection 605(c) of the Act states that the Secretary of the Interior is to “allow only such uses of the Conservation Area that the Secretary determines would further the purpose described under subsection 602” (above). The proposed management plan seeks to provide recreational opportunities that are consistent with the directives provided by the Act.

2.5.2 Recreational Target Shooting Facilities

Recreational target shooting facilities were not considered for several reasons: they are not compatible with the purpose of the NCA; there are existing recreational target shooting facilities throughout the Las Vegas Valley, including Boulder City and North Las Vegas; and they generate litter and hazardous materials through lead accumulation in bullet impact areas.